

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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FM AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4726

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMEMBASSY LISBON

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUJUMBURA 0158

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, MZ, AO

SUBJECT: SOVIET ATTITUDES TOWARD PORTUGUESE AFRICA

DURING CONVERSATION WITH SOVIET AMBASSADOR POZHIDAEV, LATTER COMMENTED THAT, WITH END OF "FASCIST" REGIME IN LISBON AND WITH IMPENDING INDEPENDENCE OF ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE, UNUSUAL SOVIET INTEREST IN THOSE TERRITORIES, ARISING FROM "NATIONAL LIBERATION" CONTEXT, WOULD PROBABLY DIMINISH. IN FACT, THEY WOULD PROBABLY END UP WITH SAME LOW LEVEL OF ATTENTION WHICH USSR GAVE TO MOST OF AFRICA SOUTH OF SAHARA, EXCEPT FOR SPECIAL CASES SUCH AS GUINEA (WHERE BAUXITE WAS IMPORTANT) AND SOMALIA. HE ASCRIBED THIS SOVIET ATTITUDE TO REALIZATION THAT AFRICA COULD HAVE LITTLE SIGNIFICANCE FOR SOVIET OBJECTIVES, THAT MOST AFRICAN STATES SHOWED LITTLE POTENTIAL FOR EFFECTIVE USE OF SOVIET AID, AND THAT SOVIETS WERE AT GREAT DISADVANTAGE IN FIELDING EXPERTS TO AFRICA BECAUSE THEY HAD SO RELATIVELY FEW SUITABLE ENGLISH AND FRENCH SPEAKERS.

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POZHIDAEV, AS ON PAST OCCASIONS, SAID THAT GREATEST

SOVIET CONCERN IN REGARD TO FUTURE OF PORTUGUESE COLONIES WAS CHINESE INFLUENCE. IN BOTH AREAS, PEKING HAD URGED LIBERATION MOVEMENTS TO HAVE SHARP BREAK WITH PORTUGUESE AND TO STRIKE OUT ON THEIR OWN IN TOTAL ANTI COLONIALIST STANCE. SOVIETS, HOWEVER, HAD COUNSELED COOPERATION WITH PORTUGAL, BOTH BEFORE AND AFTER FORMAL INDEPENDENCE, BECAUSE IT WAS "OBJECTIVELY IMPOSSIBLE" FOR THESE LANDS TO SURVIVE WITH SOME ORDER AND HOPE FOR DEVELOPMENT IF THEY CUT THEMSELVES OFF FROM MOTHERLAND OF HUNDREDS OF YEARS. MOREOVER, WITH NEW REGIME IN LISBON, THERE WAS NOT RPT NOT EVEN GOOD POLITICAL REASON FOR DOING SO.

IN REGARD TO MOZAMBIQUE, SOVIET AMBASSADOR THOUGHT MATTERS WERE GOING VERY WELL; INDEED (HE HALF JESTED) MODERATION AND EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF FRELIMO PROVED ADVANTAGES OF ONE PARTY SYSTEM, AND MOSCOW WAS GLAD FRELIMO HAD REJECTED CHINESE ADVICE. ANGOLA, HOWEVER, WAS ANOTHER STORY. USSR HAD BACKED NETO, BUT KEY ISSUE NOW WAS COLLABORATION AMONG RIVAL MOVEMENTS TO AVOID DESCENT INTO FULL CHAOS. HE WAS NOT TOO OPTIMISTIC ABOUT PROSPECTS, BUT HE THOUGHT EFFORT TOWARD CONCILIATION AMONG GROUPS AND COOPERATION WITH PORTUGAL WAS STILL WORTHWHILE, LEST CHINESE VISION WIN OUT. MARK

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